

**MINUTES**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2013  
LOUISIANA STRAWBERRY MARKETING BOARD MEETING  
47076 NORTH MORRISON BOULEVARD  
HAMMOND, LA

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chris Olah called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Strawberry Marketing Board Director Rebecca Riecke called the roll.

**DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

The presence of a quorum was declared by Mrs. Riecke.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

COMMISSIONER MIKE STRAIN, DVM  
(REBECCA RIECKE WAS DESIGNEE UNTIL  
COMMISSIONER STRAIN ARRIVED)  
WILLIAM FLETCHER  
KEVIN LIUZZA  
ERIC MORROW  
CHRIS OLAH  
HEATHER ROBERTSON

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

REGINA BRACY  
AMANDA HEBERT  
MARK LIUZZA

**ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS**

Mrs. Riecke informed the Board that the current Chairman is Chris Olah and Vice-Chairman is William Fletcher.

A motion made by Eric Morrow and second by Kevin Liuzza to keep the same Chairman, Chris Olah. The motion carried.

A motion made by Eric Morrow and second by Kevin Liuzza to keep the same Vice-Chairman, William Fletcher. The motion carried.

**CONFIRMATION OF DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Mrs. Riecke informed the Board that Commissioner Strain has asked her to serve as Director and Executive Secretary of the Strawberry Marketing Board and a confirmation vote from the Board would make these duties official.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and second by Heather Robertson to confirm Rebecca Riecke as Director and Executive Secretary of the Strawberry Marketing Board. The motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brent Robbins, Deputy Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry, stated that Commissioner Strain planned to attend the meeting, but had another meeting in Monroe earlier in the day and may be running late because of it. He also commended Mrs. Riecke for her work.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion made by William Fletcher and second by Eric Morrow to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2012, meeting. The motion carried.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Mrs. Riecke read the fiscal year 2013 financial report which included July 2012 through June 2013. She also read the financial report for the month of July 2013.

A motion made by William Fletcher and second by Kevin Liuzza to approve the fiscal year 2013 and July 2013 financial reports. The motion carried.

### **LDAF AUDITOR'S REPORT**

Kevin Finley, Internal Auditor for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry, informed board members that he performed an internal audit on the Strawberry Marketing Board. A copy of his report was included in board members' folders. He stated that the main finding was that the Board had a lack of documentation and formal processes in place, especially for the assessment collection process. Mr. Finley stopped his presentation momentarily as Commissioner Strain joined the meeting. Mr. Finley continued his presentation and discussed some of the recommendations for the Board going forward that addressed his findings.

Mr. Olah said that the Board had made an aggressive effort approximately 10 or 12 years ago to collect assessments from companies that were not paying. Commissioner Strain advised board members that there is an adjudicatory process in place for companies that refuse to pay the assessment. Mrs. Riecke stated that a LDAF auditor would be sent to companies that have not paid their assessments and have not responded to written notices requesting payment. She said that the auditor would also perform audits on other companies in the future to make sure they are paying the correct amount of assessments due. Mr. Finley explained how this process would work.

Mr. Finley advised board members that certain LDAF inspectors in the field would be checking stores they visit for strawberry sales and report those to the Board to make sure these companies are paying assessments. Mrs. Riecke stated that she has already received a report

from Weights and Measures inspectors and has added companies to the list of those expected to pay the quarterly assessment. Mr. Olah said that companies started paying their assessments when an effort was made about 10 or 12 years ago to collect them, but payments declined when no one was following up to make sure the companies paid.

Mrs. Riecke stated that the Board will begin imposing a late fee that is authorized in statute for companies that do not pay their assessments by the deadline which was recommended in Mr. Finley's report. She advised board members that late fees will be added to companies' next quarterly assessment payments.

### **SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT FUNDING**

Michelle Estay, Commodity Promotion and Research Director for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry, updated the Board on Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. She reviewed projects the industry has already benefited from that were completed with Specialty Crop Block Grant funding which included strawberry posters, strawberry billboards, the Louisiana Grown rolling billboard and the Louisiana Grown commercial.

Mrs. Estay informed the Board that it was awarded \$40,010 from this year's Specialty Crop Block Grant. She stated that the grant proposal submitted allocated funds for the following: \$10,000 for the ad agency, \$14,050 for outdoor digital messages, \$7,590 for print ads and \$8,370 for television. Mrs. Estay said that the Board could change the way the funds are used by doing a change in scope if desired. She explained the details of the budget narrative and work plan for the grant.

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) DISCUSSION**

Wanda Ward, in charge of contracts for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry, advised the Board on the request for proposals (RFP) process. She informed board members that the Specialty Crop Block Grant funding received would put the Board over the limit for processing contracts individually and the services would have to be compiled. She explained that a request for proposals is an official solicitation for proposals to provide a service. Mrs. Ward stated that the Board's request for proposals would be for a consulting service which includes, but is not limited to, design development, planning and advertising. She advised the Board that funding allocated to television advertising would have to be combined with the Specialty Crop Block Grant funding and included in the request for proposals. Mrs. Ward stated that the Board could contract directly with Louisiana Radio Network because of the dollar amount based on what was spent last year if that is what the Board chooses to do.

Mrs. Ward explained that an official request for proposals that stipulates every step of advertising and specifies each individual aspect of the grant proposal will be put together. She said that it will also include the additional dollars usually given to the Gagliano Group for advertising. Mrs. Ward stated that the processed request for proposals will have to go to the Office of Contractual Review at the Division of Administration for their approval. She said that once it is approved by the Office of Contractual Review, it will be advertised in the Advocate, the Times-Picayune and the Louisiana Procurement and Contract Network. Mrs. Ward stated

that the RFP has to be advertised for at least one day and then 30 days need to be given to allow prospective proposers time to prepare and submit their proposals. She explained that either the full Board could evaluate the submitted proposals or three or four board members could be selected to do so. Mrs. Ward said that once the paper proposals are evaluated, the Board can either choose to select an advertising agency or to request oral presentations which she recommended. She explained that after the oral presentations are presented, they will be scored as a group. She stated that the proposer to be awarded will be chosen at that point and is usually the one with the highest score. Mrs. Ward advised the Board that any consulting service that is \$50,000 and up has to be processed by RFP. She said that contracts over \$20,000 and below \$50,000 have to go to the Office of Contractual Review, but those below \$20,000 may be processed in-house. Mrs. Ward explained that the Office of Contractual Review looks at consulting contracts as three-year agreements.

A motion made by William Fletcher and second by Eric Morrow to recommend issuing a RFP for an amount not to exceed \$70,000. The motion carried.

Mrs. Ward stated that the Board would need to decide if the RFP should be for one or three years. Mrs. Estay explained that if the RFP is for three years, the advertising agency could be given different budget amounts for each year since grant funding after the first year is uncertain. Mrs. Ward advised board members that the benefit of a three-year RFP is not having to go through the process every year. She said that if the Board receives more money than expected, the contract can be increased by up to ten percent.

A motion made by Eric Morrow and second by Kevin Liuzza to approve issuing the RFP for three years. The motion carried.

Mrs. Estay asked board members if they would like to leave the Specialty Crop Block Grant money allocated as it currently is or make changes. The Board agreed that the strawberry billboards that were paid for by previous Specialty Crop Block Grant funding were very effective and received an extremely positive response. Board members expressed that they would like to use these same billboards again that were already purchased.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Jeanne Smith with LPB presented an advertising proposal to the Board for spring 2014 that would run for 10 weeks. Ms. Smith gave board members a handout explaining the proposal which includes the Saturday Cooking Block on LPB, an investment of \$3,500 (\$350/week x 10 weeks), and the Daily Cooking Block on LPB2, an investment of \$2,250 (\$225/week x 10 weeks), for a total of \$5,750.

Nick Gagliano of the Gagliano Group was recognized, but had no comment.

Neal Gladner of Louisiana Radio Network stated that he came to the meeting to introduce himself to the Board since he will be the new contact person.

Mrs. Estay stated that the Board would need to decide who would sit on the panel to score the RFP proposals. Mrs. Riecke said that any board members who would like to sit on the panel could do so. She said that Mrs. Estay and Mrs. Ward have sat on RFP panels in the past and could do so for this one as well. Mr. Olah stated that after the panel chooses proposers to present, the full Board would meet for oral presentations and then decide which advertising agency would be awarded the contract. He stated that this next meeting would need to be the first of November.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

No further comments were made. A motion made by Commissioner Strain and second by Eric Morrow to adjourn. The motion carried.